

straighten up this immigration system in America.

SECRETARY POWELL MEETS WITH TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH GUL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, this Thursday Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul is scheduled to visit the United States for meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Powell. On the eve of his visit, I come to the House floor to highlight two serious issues: first, the ongoing blockade against Armenia; and, second, the nearly three-decade-long occupation of the northern third of the sovereign Island of Cyprus.

Madam Speaker, for the last 11 years, Turkey has imposed a crippling blockade against Armenia. The blockade clearly runs afoul of U.S. and international law. In fact, both the U.S. Government and the European Community have repeatedly called on Turkey to lift their campaign of attempting to starve an entire nation. Turkey's denial of U.S. and international assistance to Armenia is in violation of their commitments to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which they have signed.

Madam Speaker, Turkey's blockades not only affect Armenia, they affect the entire South Caucasus region. By choking off a major transportation region across the Caucasus, Turkey is stunting the growth of the economies of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and even Turkey itself. I urge the administration to take an active role in pressing Foreign Minister Gul to open the border with Armenia.

The administration has consistently supported the development of normal relations between Armenia and Turkey and should continue to do so. A resolution of this dispute will mean stability and further economic development of the South Caucasus, and this should be done immediately and without preconditions.

Madam Speaker, Turkey's continuing occupation of the northern third of the Island of Cyprus is also one of Turkey's most egregious violations of international law. Yesterday marked the 29th anniversary of Turkey's illegal military occupation beginning on June 20, 1974.

This has been a monumental year for the Island of Cyprus. The European Union's decision to invite the divided island into the EU has placed intense international scrutiny on the reunification talks. The EU invitation is for the Republic of Cyprus, which is internationally recognized as the legitimate government of the entire island. But EU membership would be suspended in the occupied area until the end of the Turkish occupation, and the Cypriot parliament has unanimously approved the accession to the European Union.

Recent moves by Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, have failed to lessen international pressure. Denktash's move to partially lift restrictions on movement across the UN's cease-fire line and give the ability of Turkish and Greek Cypriots to briefly visit the other side of the island has brought a glimmer of hope, but also renewed frustration to the Cypriot people.

Tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots in the north have recently peacefully protested Denktash's decision to reject the U.N. plan to reunify the island, and Turkish Cypriot citizens made this rare public rebuff of Denktash's demanding reunification so that the coming prosperity of the European Union-Cyprus partnership does not pass them by.

Madam Speaker, when Foreign Minister Gul comes to meet with the Bush administration, I would hope these issues would be discussed. Turkey has long stated that it is a Western-leaning European democracy, but in this country it will no longer be judged solely by its words. Now they must fulfill their obligations under international agreements and laws by dropping their illegal blockade against Armenia and finally removing their troops from the Island of Cyprus.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I rise again tonight to talk about an issue that I suspect many of my colleagues are becoming weary of, and frankly, I am as well. It is the issue of the cost of prescription drugs and what we pay in the United States compared to what the rest of the industrialized world pays for those exact same drugs.

What I have tonight is a chart. I apologize, it is a little difficult to read. I am going to hold up the back of today's Congressional Daily. It has a picture of two tablets in a little cardboard container and under it the captions says, "Quick. Pick The Capsule That Hasn't Been Tampered With." And somehow we are supposed to believe that if we allow Americans to have access to FDA-approved drugs from FDA-approved facilities from around the world, that obviously people are going to tamper with them and people will die.

So we have made up our own little chart, a little comparison that says, "Quick. Pick The Bottle That Hasn't Been Tampered With." Can you pick which one?

The fact of the matter is, this year we will import from other countries, and I have the exact number, \$824,888,000 worth of imported wine. Now, it is altogether possible that somebody could tamper with that wine. Yet every day Americans buy bottles of wine from all over the world and they

open that wine, and how do they know that it has not had arsenic put in it? They do not. We take a risk every day.

Every day Americans eat imported plantains, imported cucumbers, imported fruits, imported vegetables, and imported meat. Americans take a risk every day and we do not even inspect them. Well, I take that back, we do inspect them a little bit. About 2 percent of the products coming into the country get inspected. But, nonetheless, if you eat an imported food that has some form of food-borne pathogen and you die, you are still dead.

Now, what do we know. The CDC and the FDA keep very good records, and we have had testimony and we have asked them this question several times, how many Americans have actually become seriously ill or died from taking FDA-approved drugs from other countries? And it is an easy number to remember. It is a nice round number. The number is zero. Yet we continue to hear these scare tactics.

Scare tactics serve only one purpose, and that is to obscure the facts. The facts, I think, speak for themselves, though, and that is that Americans, because we are a captive market, pay the world's highest prices for drugs, which largely are developed here in the United States and many times paid for by the taxpayers' research dollars. Let us take one drug, perhaps the most effective anti-breast-cancer drug ever developed, Tamoxifen, developed essentially here in the United States with taxpayer dollars.

We invested almost half a billion dollars, taxpayer dollars, developing Tamoxifen, but here is what really chaps my hide. Americans are expected to pay \$360 a month for Tamoxifen. That drug can be purchased every day of the week in Germany for \$60, as we did, or it can be bought in Canada for \$50.

Now, scare tactics are really not about helping Americans understand the facts, because the facts speak for themselves. It is about trying to obscure the facts.

We require in our bill that we begin to develop a process of counterfeit-proof, tamper-proof packaging which will benefit whether the drugs are imported, exported, or made and consumed here in the United States.

This is really about profit over people. It is not about safety, it is not about research, it is about money. It is about big money. We estimate that over the next 10 years, seniors alone, if we open up markets and markets level those prices here in the United States, seniors alone could save over \$600 billion. That is with a "B". We are talking real money. As my colleague from Oregon earlier said, that could be worth more than this entire prescription drug benefit plan that we are talking about.

Let me tell my colleagues the story of Dr. Wenner from Vermont. Her clinic began to encourage, or at least assist their patients to buy their drugs from

Canada rather than in the United States. They have kept very scrupulous records. So far the records she gave us in testimony, which was sworn testimony before a subcommittee here in the House, was that her patients had been saving 62 percent, and she had seen no adverse reactions to the drugs.

Later this week Members will get a chance to vote on this important matter, and they are going to have to ask themselves, is it really about safety? Is it really about research? Or is it really about putting profit over people?

Ultimately, we are going to have to ask ourselves those questions and we are going to have to defend the answer. Because if a year from now we are still paying \$360 for that Tamoxifen and the Germans are paying \$60, it is not shame on them, it is shame on us.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I appreciate it very much, Madam Speaker.

I once again this evening continue reading constituent mail that has come to the State of Illinois, 3,621 comments, that were actually made available to people by MoveOn.org, which had on the Web site a petition that said, "We believe that Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distortion of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs."

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A number of times, the Speaker has cautioned Members who get up to be careful that we say proper things and do not impugn anybody's integrity on this floor. I agree that we ought to have a level of decorum. But I want to also read a quote from Theodore Roosevelt, because these are coming from constituents who only want to know the truth and want a process, an independent commission to make sure that we get the truth about why it is that the United States thought it was an imminent threat that we had to go to war. This quote, I think, is important for us to look at. This is from the former President, Theodore Roosevelt:

"To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we are to stand by the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and ser-

vile but is morally treasonable to the American public."

So it is really in that spirit that many, many people, in fact, about 320,000 people who are also calling for an independent commission to investigate the truth about the rationale for going to war in Iraq who have sent letters. Here is one, from Darryl of Watseka, Illinois:

"As a father of one of our Nation's finest, I respectfully request that you demand an independent review of our government's actions leading up to the war in Iraq. The U.S., once a greatly respected Nation around the world, has now made a large part of the world not trust us. If we as a Nation do not question questionable acts of our own government, how can we go around the world telling other nations to create democracies when the one we have seems more like a dictatorship than a democracy?"

"The current leadership of this great Nation and the media manipulated the general public into believing Iraq was a threat to us. If we don't question these actions, how can we question the actions of other nations? For years, the world has stated that the U.S. has a double set of standards, one for us and one for the rest of the world. Will we set a precedent of attacking other nations with false justification for the rest of the world? What are we teaching our children? It's okay if you don't like someone to attack them first because our government says it's okay."

"Before the war, President Bush and Colin Powell claimed that Iraq was a threat to our security with weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. Since the war, they have changed their tune and say that Iraq had a weapons program. That alone should make one want to question their actions. Don't let politics dictate your actions, let the facts. When I hear that other nations think President Bush is more of a threat to the world peace than Iraq was, it disturbs me. I love my country and believe that we can make a difference in the world, but if we don't question these actions, I highly doubt that the rest of the world will trust us again."

Rodney from Sauk Village says:

"My youngest brother is in Baghdad in a rank heavy unit which is costing taxpayers millions of dollars per month in salary alone. Our men and women are still over there being killed but the President claims the war is over. I can't tell. I've always been of the belief that if you get tired of being treated a certain way, eventually you'll stand up and do something to change it. We need to be focusing on the wars at home like gang violence, AIDS and the homeless."

Ronald from Malden says:

"I am a 'never miss an election' independent who has never voted a straight party ticket. I seriously would like to know who misled us or the President or if our intelligence community is this poor. It appears there are no weapons

of mass destruction or our great intelligence that told us all about them before the war certainly could have located at least a few of them by now. Billions of our tax dollars have been spent on this war and billions more will continue to go out every month for years now because of this while we cut domestic programs, spend billions on interest alone for the deficit to cut taxes, most to people who do not need it, and mortgage our children's future. Because of lies? Because of incompetency? I want to know what happened."

Beth from Plano, Illinois:

"The public, especially the families of the women and men who have bravely entered into military service, worry, and justifiably so, that the war in Iraq is turning out to be a second Vietnam. We want to know whether this war was truly justified, or if President Bush and his administration merely embarked upon a reckless revenge match with disregard for the very citizens they have sworn to protect."

Mary from Westmont, Illinois:

"I have a nephew in the military and a niece soon to follow. Why were our young men and women's lives threatened, lost?"

This must be stopped.

HEAD START

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Madam Speaker, I would like to point out that appropriate committees in the House and the other body are investigating those issues of concern to the previous speaker. If those committees do not appropriately handle the issue, then I am certain that an independent investigative commission would be in order.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about Head Start. This week it is scheduled to be reauthorized on the House floor. Currently, there is much confusion about Head Start and its reauthorization. The facts are these: number one, Head Start serves approximately 1 million children. Secondly, state-run early learning programs serve another 1 million eligible preschool children. That is 2 million out of 3 million, so that means 1 million essentially are falling through the cracks. Of course, this is of great concern because where you start out in the learning curve usually signifies where you are going to end up. So we are serving only two-thirds of those children who are eligible.

Head Start is effective in social development, language proficiency, and some early learning skills and is very worthwhile. I think most people that know anything about Head Start certainly advocate the program and feel it is something that we really need to continue to reauthorize. But I think it is important also to realize that Head